

Medicare to pay for a tax cut for the wealthy will cost seniors \$1,000 more a year and will mean that they will lose their choice of doctors. Amazingly, Republicans now say they are only following the Medicare trustees instructions and trying to save the program from insolvency.

But, yesterday, the Medicare trustees, themselves, spoke out on the Republican plan. In an editorial published in the Los Angeles Times, the trustees called the Republican Medicare cuts excessive and said those cuts would seriously hurt seniors.

And, contrary to Republican claims, the Medicare trustees say that the trust fund is not in a sudden crisis, but has actually improved over the past few years. As the trustees said yesterday: "The only thing that has really changed is the political needs of those who are hoping to use major Medicare cuts for other purposes." As we know, those other purposes are tax cuts for the wealthy.

LIMITATION OF TIME FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2126, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1996

Mr. MURTHA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that further consideration of the bill H.R. 2126 in the Committee of the Whole pursuant to House Resolution 205 continue for a period not to exceed 5 hours—excluding time consumed by recorded votes and proceedings incidental thereto.

The Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HOBSON). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

SUPPORT THE B-2

(Mr. SALMON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SALMON. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning in strong support of the B-2 stealth bomber, and in strong opposition to the Dellums/Kasich amendment to be offered later today to eliminate funding for future bombers.

In today's uncertain world, we will be lucky to have a day's warning before a conflict erupts. With our forward presence constantly shrinking, the B-2 provides us with the ability to rapidly project power deep within well-protected enemy territory.

Further, while the premium on surprise and quick strike ability is increasing, the premium placed on the lives of our service men and women remains paramount. With stealth and precision-guided munitions, one B-2 with a crew of two is as effective as 75 conventional aircraft which place 132 air crew at risk. And the B-2 can do this without being staged on the dangerous front lines of a conflict.

The options that the B-2 provides are vital to the future of our Nation's power projection capabilities. It is currently the only bomber in production,

and the only one planned. If the Dellums/Kasich amendment passes later today, we will lose these capabilities along with the ability to rapidly produce them in the future. If this amendment passes, by the year 2030, we will be sending our pilots into combat in 70 year old B-52's. This would be the same as sending our fighter pilots into Desert Storm in wooden and cloth biplanes.

And, the B-2 fits under the budget cap that was approved in the House earlier this year.

I urge a "no" vote on the Dellums-Kasich amendment when it is offered later today. Please join me in voting to maintain our nation's critical power projection capabilities.

ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, illegal immigration is at an all-time high: 4 million illegal immigrants in America. A study now shows that many of them actually end up with food stamps, free health care, free education, free housing, while the Congress of the United States continues to cut money for American citizens. Unbelievable.

I say, ladies and gentlemen, it is time to put American military troops on our border. They are falling out of chairs without arm rests overseas and we have got millions of illegal immigrants, many of them running over our borders with back packs full of cocaine and heroin. Beam me up. Whoever created this immigration policy is in fact smoking dope.

THE B-52 BOMBER

(Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, President Reagan said, "If we are forced to fight, we must have the means and the determination to prevail or we will not have what it takes to secure the peace." This then, is the B-2 Bomber's reason for existence.

The chairman and members of the National Security Committee have clearly supported the B-2. Numerous studies indicate that the United States will require more than 20 B-2 bombers to support the U.S. national military strategy and that makes the B-2 a critical part of our war fighting arsenal and will play a unique role in each and every air and land battle that lies ahead.

The aging fleet of B-52 and B-1 bombers will see their performance decline in the next 5 to 10 years and can never perform the stealth mission of the B-2. In fact, there are no new bombers on the drawing board for the next 20 years. Bottomline: The B-2 is an installment on Congress' promise to revitalize our national security posture.

I challenge each of you to think about the direction of this world. The notion that we are safe—or war is less likely—should be dismissed. The reality is their names may have changed but they are still there—ballistic missiles, chemical weapons, and nuclear weapons. We must have the ability to counter that threat. The time is now—I urge your vote of support for the B-2.

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ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS ON THE MAJORITY'S HIT LIST

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, next Monday I will visit an elementary school, Franklin Elementary School, which is in my district in Houston. This is a school which demonstrates the need for a Federal role in education.

The schools in my district are not wealthy. They rely on Federal education dollars to supplement the State and local funding that they receive. Because of the funding problems that are all too common around the country, not just in Texas, the State and local money just is not enough to provide these children the education, the facilities, and resources these children deserve.

And yet, these kids, their parents, and their teachers kept plugging away. In 1994, the percentage of the students passing a State exam was 35 to 59 percent. In 1995, the percentage rose to 75 to 89 percent. How did this happen? With a dedicated principal, hard-working teachers, involved parents, and extra work on Saturdays, the students did it.

This is an inner-city school that receives chapter I funds. This is a school in which 98 percent of the students receive subsidized breakfast or lunch. In response to their commitment and success, the majority is cutting their funding. And I would like to say: "Welcome back, kids. Along with the seniors, you are on the majority's hit list."

AMERICA MUST PLAN FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

(Mr. SCARBOROUGH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Mr. Speaker, I have been hearing a lot about Medicare and the B-2 bomber. Actually, the two are related, because it seems that some Members continue to stick their head in the sand and deny basic facts.

First of all, if we do nothing on Medicare, in 7 years the trustees say that Medicare goes bankrupt. Something has to be done. We cannot ignore it. We have to face the 21st century with the facts.

The same is true with the B-2 bomber. If we do nothing on the B-2 bomber, if we go along with the Dellums-Kasich amendment, then we are sticking our head in the sand. By the year 2010, the B-52 heavy bombers that we have protecting this country will be over 50 years old.

We cannot sit back and do nothing anymore. We have to plan for the 21st century, not only in Medicare but also in protecting the shores and senior citizens and the young and the old alike.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to oppose the Dellums-Kasich amendment and support the B-2 bomber.

BIPARTISAN EFFORT IS NEEDED TO ADDRESS QUESTIONS OF ETHICS

(Mr. DOGGETT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, to resolve so many of the problems of this country, it is essential that Republicans and Democrats come together in a bipartisan fashion. We have seen in this session how this can work.

We have seen a 50-year-old lobbying law adjusted. We have seen a gift ban rule to ban gifts to Members of the Senate approved. And yesterday in a dramatic action, we saw Republicans join Democrats to actually vote to expel a Member.

But for some reason there is a line down the rotunda, and none of that bipartisanship is happening on this side of the Capitol. At the same time that action was being taken, this body was rejecting, on a party line basis, doing anything about gifts for Members of Congress.

Mr. Speaker, today also is the first anniversary, 1 year ago a complaint concerning GOPAC and the Speaker was made to the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct and we have done nothing but dillydallied.

It is time our Republican Members joined us and put a hand on the broom to sweep clean the questions of integrity concerning this House.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HOBSON). It should be noted that Members should not refer to disciplinary actions in either House.

RESTORING HOPE AND OPPORTUNITY

(Mr. KNOLLENBERG asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, the Republican majority has been diligently working to keep our promises to the American people. This fall we will

complete work on our balanced budget plan, save Medicare from bankruptcy, and allow working families and businesses to keep more of what they earn.

For too long, Washington's solution to America's problems was always new spending and new taxes. As a result, our national debt now exceeds \$4.9 trillion and the average American family pays more in taxes than it spends on clothing, food, and shelter combined.

This fall offers our best chance to honestly balance the budget, cut exorbitant taxes, and ensure that our children have a bright future that is free of debt and full of hope.

The choices are simple we can either spend now and worry later or we can move forward with an agenda that forces the Federal Government to live within its means, saves the American dream for our children, and lays the foundation for a generation of economic growth and prosperity.

Mr. Speaker, there are no legitimate excuses for continuing to spend money that we do not have. It is time for Congress to quit avoiding the tough choices and restore some sanity to the Federal budget.

AMERICA NEEDS THE B-2 BOMBER

(Mr. TORRES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, the current debate over the B-2 bomber marks a turning point for the preservation of U.S. air power. It has been said that the history of U.S. military power is characterized by technological achievements that produced globally dominating weapons systems. I would maintain that the B-2 bomber is just such a technological achievement. If we examine the core competencies of each of our branch of services, it would be evident that independent strategic bombardment has clearly become the unique core competency of our new U.S. Air Force. Indeed, the United States is no longer just a maritime power—we are an aerospace power, and this strategic air power is vital to our national security.

The President of this United States must continue to have the leverage to deter an aggressor by threatening to destroy most of its economic infrastructure with an immediate, devastating strike. If such a strike were necessary, it could be done with B-2's with minimum support, minimum risk, minimum collateral damage, and without U.S. ground force fatalities.

The B-2 has global range, high subsonic speed and an extremely low radar signature. It combines the most modern avionics with the ability to deliver precision weapons in all weather conditions. Having created this devastating capability I would urge my colleagues not to abandon it without truly understanding the facts. We must project our legacy in air power into the future—to do this we need the B-2 bomber.

MEDICARE IS GOING BROKE

(Mr. BURR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BURR. Mr. Speaker, Medicare is going broke. Not maybe. Not way down the road. If this Congress does not address this crisis, our Medicare system will be out of money by the year 2002.

This is not an issue for partisan bickering. This is not an issue where business-as-usual is appropriate. The pending insolvency of Medicare threatens the availability of health care to more than 32 million of America's senior citizens.

The Medicare crisis was defined in April by the Medicare Board of Trustees—including Secretaries Reich, Shalala, and Rubin. In their report on the status of the Medicare Program, they indicate that "the Medicare program is clearly unsustainable in its present form" and they "strongly recommend that the crisis presented by the financial condition of the Medicare trust funds be urgently addressed."

Mr. Speaker, we owe it to our senior citizens to face this Medicare crisis head on. It is the responsibility of Congress to fulfill our commitment to this country's seniors and initiate Medicare reform making this program financially sound now and in the years to come.

THE CRUEL HOAX OF MEDICARE'S INSOLVENCY

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise simply to correct this terrible hoax that the Republicans are playing on the American people, that somehow the Medicare Program is bankrupt or insolvent.

In fact, the trustee's report that came out this year showed dramatically that Medicare has never had more money available and, in fact, the life of the program is at least 7 years beyond this year. That is a longer period of time before Medicare goes insolvent than any other period of time that the trustees have reported on in the last few years.

The fact of the matter is that we cannot keep this Medicare Program with a huge pot of money, because if we did that, providers and others would want to raid the program to take advantage of that pot of money. Congress has historically kept the amount of money simply for a few years going in order to protect the program, and it is a cruel hoax on the American people to suggest that Medicare is going insolvent.

What the Republicans are doing is raiding the Medicare trust fund in order to finance a tax cut. It is that simply. They do not want to tell the truth about what is happening here. It is a huge tax cut for the richest Americans.